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Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

Report of the United Nations system in Ecuador**

Summary

This report refers to the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, together with the contributions made by various United Nations agencies in Ecuador in compliance with the recommendations made at the sixth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples in the framework of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is the third joint report submitted to the Permanent Forum by United Nations agencies; it was prepared by the inter-agency intercultural theme group chaired by the United Nations Population Fund in Ecuador.

* E/C.19/2008/1.

** This report was submitted late in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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I. Cooperation framework

1. In the context of United Nations reform, Ecuador is moving towards harmonizing views, strategies and actions and streamlining procedures. The common country assessment of the United Nations system in Ecuador in 2002 highlighted the need to work to reduce inequalities and exclusion in the economic, social, ethnic and gender spheres. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) incorporates in its strategies and actions an intercultural and gender perspective aimed at reducing these inequalities. Through a process of consultation with civil society organizations in November and December 2007, these approaches have been incorporated into the next UNDAF programme (2009-2013). Since 2007, the country has also had a National Development Plan for the period 2007-2010 which can serve to a considerable extent as a basis for cooperation with the United Nations system.

2. The inter-agency, intercultural theme group established by the United Nations country team is making efforts to incorporate an intercultural approach into UNDAF programming. The theme group is composed of United Nations focal points, who are participating in an effort to harmonize views, knowledge and experiences in their work with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and to implement an annual work programme agreed by the agencies. The following agencies are part of the theme group: the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

II. Coordination of United Nations agencies in Ecuador

3. The practice of inter-agency coordination at the country level is in keeping with the United Nations reform and with the Permanent Forum's mandate to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of all activities related to indigenous issues within the United Nations system.

III. Cooperation among United Nations agencies in Ecuador

4. Inter-agency activities are aimed at the three areas of cooperation defined by UNDAF: poverty reduction through access to basic social services; environmental sustainability; and democratic governance and transparency. In these three areas, United Nations agencies are involved in various projects, some of which are being jointly implemented with the indigenous peoples and nations of Ecuador. The working strategies include: (a) focusing agency efforts on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples; (b) raising awareness of gaps based on ethnicity, race and gender; (c) empowering indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples as partners in

development strategies; and (d) creating internal mechanisms to ensure the incorporation of an intercultural perspective.

IV. Preparatory activities for the Permanent Forum

5. As part of the preparatory activities for the sixth session of the Permanent Forum, UNFPA, as the lead agency of the inter-agency intercultural theme group, with the participation of United Nations organizations, organized the preparatory workshop for male and female national leaders to review the issues considered by the Forum and to prepare proposals. The preparatory workshop was attended by 60 delegates representing national indigenous organizations, central government institutions, non-governmental organizations and women's organizations. The workshop was also attended by indigenous officials from the Council for the Development of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE), a representative of the Forum, Dr. Nina Pacari, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ecuador. A core document was prepared at the workshop to serve as a guide for the national participants attending the Forum.

V. Contributions to the Millennium Development Goals

6. The inter-agency intercultural theme group supported the preparation of Ecuador's report on the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of the indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples. The report, which focuses on the inequality gaps that persist between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations, was mainly prepared by UNDP and UNFPA as an inter-agency activity. The report includes recommendations for policies and strategies to enhance progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals and to close the inequality gaps. It is now at the publication stage.

VI. Poverty reduction through access to basic social services

A. Bilingual intercultural education

7. Through the indigenous component of the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme, jointly executed by UNDP and OHCHR and supported by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation, human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples were incorporated into the curriculum of the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education (DINEIB).

B. Disaggregated statistics

8. In accordance with the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum, UNFPA supported the process of strengthening and institutionalizing the analysis and use of statistical information on indigenous peoples. As a result of this ongoing work of dialogue and consensus with the various actors participating in data production and dissemination, the National Commission on Statistics for Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples was established, under the coordination of the

National Statistics and Census Institute, CODENPE and the Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples Development Council.

9. The basic objective of the Commission is to harmonize and reach consensus regarding quantitative and qualitative information on the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples of Ecuador, and to standardize methodologies for calculating indicators used in studying the living conditions of these important population groups. The intention is to improve the system for production, use and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by ethnic status to ensure the visibility of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples in the data and to facilitate the implementation of specific public policies for those peoples.

10. The Commission held a first internal training workshop with the active participation of a large number of actors and with technical support from the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) — Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). At the workshop, the current situation of statistics on the indigenous peoples in Ecuador was reviewed and strategy guidelines for future action were defined.

C. Gender

11. In cooperation with UNFPA, UNIFEM, the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Family Care International, and the Association of Quechua Women of Sucumbíos (AMNKISE), a seminar was held on health, violence and proper treatment, with analysis of lessons learned and practices for tackling violence against indigenous women.

12. From 6 to 8 June 2007 a preparatory meeting took place in Quito for the Fifth Continental Summit of Indigenous Women of the Americas, which was held in Toronto, Canada, at the beginning of July. In Quito, 30 indigenous women from seven South American countries discussed how to strengthen their participation in a number of international decision-making forums, including the Andean Community and the Organization of American States. They also discussed the opportunities offered by international cooperation and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The preparatory meeting in Quito was sponsored by UNIFEM.

13. With the support of UNFPA and UNIFEM, on 7 June 2007, the National Council for Women (CONAMU) together with national women's organizations organized a "pre-constituent" session in order to consider the women's proposals to the Assembly. It was attended by women leaders from throughout the country. Over 500 indigenous women came to present their proposals, which were submitted to the Director of CONAMU and the representative of UNFPA.

14. As the health indicators of indigenous women showed gaps in relation to those of non-indigenous women, especially for maternal health, UNFPA Ecuador made efforts to learn more about the views of indigenous women on the reproductive health services in two indigenous Quechua areas of the country: Otavalo and Chimborazo. These analyses have led to a greater awareness of the cultural barriers that impede indigenous women's access to reproductive health services and have provided a basis for designing strategies to improve services.

15. In Chimborazo, the Social Research Centre provided support for the second phase of the Dolores Caguango School of Indigenous Women Leaders with

emphasis on training in sexual and reproductive rights, promotion of the Free Maternity and Child Care Act and the establishment of a social monitoring process. Efforts are being made with health personnel for cultural adaptation of health services and a survey of the attitudes and needs of the indigenous populations has been carried out.

16. In the province of Bolívar the issues of sexual and reproductive health have been incorporated into the training of indigenous advocates and the teaching materials, including a self-help manual, have been adapted to include the Andean world view in the health-care processes. In Sucumbíos, in association with AMNKISE, Free Maternity and Child Care Act beneficiaries' committees have been established with the participation of indigenous representatives; communities have been provided with training on sexual and reproductive rights in their own language; and health advocates are working on issues of gender, violence prevention, recognition of signs indicating obstetric emergency and community transport for obstetric emergency patients. Support has been provided for the organization and training of young indigenous women from AMNKISE on health and reproductive rights and leadership issues. In the province of Orellana, community advocates and teaching facilitators have received training for making visits to indigenous communities and colonies to provide information and access to sexual and reproductive rights services.

17. In the context of the HURIST programme, a national workshop was held on 20 September on the gender perspective with indigenous peoples. It was attended by thirty-five participants, who made a series of recommendations.

D. Inter-agency programme

18. The theme group produced a concept note entitled "Development and Cultural Diversity to reduce Poverty and promote Social Inclusion" as a proposal for the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. This proposal gives priority to action with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples. The concept note was approved and the next step was preparation of the project document in order to implement a three-year innovative programme of collaboration with civil society organizations in the context of implementation of the intercultural perspective in sustainable human development. The programme will be implemented in three regions, Esmeraldas, Chimborazo and Sucumbíos, and the national partners are the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the National Secretariat for Planning and Development.

VII. Environmental sustainability

19. The UNDP Small Grants Programme has supported local and national sustainable projects that are directly managed by indigenous organizations or non-governmental organizations working with indigenous groups.

A. Community tourism

20. An international seminar on community tourism in Ecuador, from local management to national public policies, was held on 26 and 27 July 2007. Its organizing committee consisted of UNESCO, UNWTO, the Netherlands Development Organization, The Nature Conservancy, United States Agency for International Development, Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador, the Plurinational Federation of Community Tourism of Ecuador and CODENPE. The main objective of the seminar was to contribute to the national debate on the importance of community tourism and its inclusion in national State policies in order to strengthen its impact on poverty reduction and preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

21. International representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, together with the national authorities and other participants, demonstrated the diversity of views that exist on community tourism. One result of the participants' joint efforts was the establishment of a Latin American network to support community tourism, with a view to promoting the inclusion of community tourism on national government agendas. In addition, in the case of Ecuador, there was recognition that the Development of Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan 2006-2020 should include the inputs requested by the community sector.

B. Indigenous peoples in isolation

22. With regard to the rights of indigenous peoples in isolation, a programme presented by a number of agencies of the United Nations system in Ecuador to the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, entitled "Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve" includes the following expected output: "National policies and strategies for protection of peoples in voluntary isolation have been incorporated into regional plans and programmes." Implementation of this programme will begin in 2008.

C. Return to traditional products

23. FAO has been supporting the indigenous peoples of Chimborazo in the sustainable use of agricultural resources by offering incentives to produce, grow and process native species and varieties in order to make use of traditional knowledge in the production sector by applying cultivation and processing techniques that are based on respect for the intellectual property rights of the indigenous peoples and local communities.

VIII. Democratic governance and transparency

24. In 2007 the second phase of the indigenous component of the global HURIST programme (see paragraph 7) was completed. It was implemented in Ecuador by the National Directorate for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples and the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education. In this final year, efforts were

concentrated on disseminating information on individual and collective human rights to the different indigenous peoples and nationalities of the country through workshops and the publication of manuals and studies.

25. At the request of the national Government, UNESCO has begun to provide the necessary technical cooperation to consolidate integrated cultural policies in the country through the recently created Ministry of Culture in response to the historical demands of creators, artists and citizens to resolve the problems of dispersion of resources, the disorganized supply of cultural goods and services, the lack of a long-term integrated policy based on an attitude of respect for the diversity and multiculturalism of the Ecuadorian population and also the poor level of coordination between institutions and agencies responsible for designing and implementing cultural policies.

A. Consultative mechanism with the United Nations system

26. With the support of the HURIST programme, the intercultural theme group is continuing to work on establishing a mechanism for participation such as an advisory council and adviser on indigenous peoples and the United Nations system in Ecuador, with a view to considering the human rights of indigenous peoples and incorporating the indigenous world view into relevant programmes and strategies.

B. Children and youth

27. In May 2007, a minimum agenda for the rights of indigenous children and youth was presented by a group of young Ecuadorian delegates at the plenary session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The agenda for indigenous children includes the ideas, dreams and contributions of over four thousand children from the system of bilingual intercultural education. These initiatives are supported by UNICEF.

C. Report of the Special Rapporteur

28. The Andean project for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples and people of African descent in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru (sponsored by OHCHR) facilitated publication of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, who visited Ecuador from 24 April to 4 May 2006.

IX. Obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

29. We have not found any significant obstacles and have rather tried to make use of the opportunities for work with national agencies in a context of significant political change in the country.

X. Factors facilitating the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

30. The inter-agency theme group supports joint efforts and has contributed to achieving a greater awareness and coordination of the work among agencies as well as a higher public profile of the system on intercultural issues, in close contact with indigenous leaders which has facilitated the implementation of a number of national initiatives.

XI. Other relevant information

A. International Day of the World's Indigenous People

31. The United Nations system in Ecuador, through the intercultural theme group, the European Union and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency, jointly organized a commemoration event which brought together representatives of indigenous organizations, government and international cooperation agencies in the Mindalae ethnographic museum.

B. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

32. Taking advantage of the recent approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on 5 and 6 November UNICEF convened an expanded meeting of its regional Advisory Group of Indigenous Leaders in Quito.

XII. Conclusions

33. The work of the United Nations in Ecuador with indigenous peoples in 2007 made progress in finalizing the report on the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of the indigenous peoples; in continuing to confer with the indigenous peoples in the ongoing process of setting up an advisory council composed of representatives of national bodies; in publishing the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples; in publishing the third information bulletin of the intercultural theme group; and in raising public awareness of existing inequality gaps through a number of initiatives, including the strengthening of statistical information systems in the crucial area of disaggregated data. The work of the United Nations on indigenous peoples has contributed to the joint programming of the Organization by ensuring an intercultural approach in the future UNDAF programme (2009-2013).

34. The challenges for 2008 include following up on the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, disseminating the report on the Millennium Development Goals among the indigenous peoples, the creation of a mechanism for consultation with the indigenous peoples and promoting the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into public policy. Many of these challenges are included in the future inter-agency programme "Development and Cultural Diversity to Reduce Poverty and Promote Social Inclusion", to be implemented over the next three years and

which appears to be an innovative challenge in coordination between the various agencies of the United Nations, the State and civil society organizations to work with an intercultural perspective in the context of sustainable human development.